

Chris O'Brien

From: Lena Cohen <lena.a.cohen@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 3:24 PM
To: Chris O'Brien
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Subject: Testimony for 7/22 House Committee on Finance - Close the ACI High Security Center

Dear House Finance Committee Representatives,

My name is Lena Cohen and I am a constituent of Rhode Island. I live at 39 East George St. 02906.

I'm writing today to demand you take action to close the ACI High Security Center. While the Governor's current budget proposes closing two modules within High Security, this budget plan needs to go further and close the High Security Center outright.

I am concerned about the spread of COVID-19 in the ACI High Security Center, the lack of medical care, inhumane conditions, and the lack of transparency about these conditions.

The ACI High Security Center was built to house individuals in long-term solitary confinement, which is in violation of the UN's Mandela Rules. RIDOC Director Coyne-Fague noted herself in her 2019 testimony to this Committee that "keeping people in cells 23 hours a day is not really the way to go." She also spoke on the dangerous conditions of the outdated building, further proof that the entire facility needs to close. The High Security Center is RIDOC's most expensive facility to run at a yearly cost of almost \$200,000 per prisoner. Rhode Island would save millions of dollars a year by permanently closing High Security and could re-allocate these funds to desperately needed community services.

I hope that the House Finance Committee will take bold action in fully closing the ACI High Security Center.

Thank you,
Lena Cohen